

# TOLDEO BLADE

## CSX terminal shows off for its neighbors

**2,000 visit North Baltimore site, watch big cranes transfer freight**

June 29, 2011

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NORTH BALTIMORE, Ohio -- Laid off several years ago from his job as a metal fabricator at an automotive-industry supplier Chad Main was one of the statistics from that sector's rapid retrenchment during the economic slump that has hammered northwest Ohio.

But CSX Transportation Corp.'s decision in 2006 to build a massive freight-transfer terminal in Wood County's Henry Township tossed a financial lifeline to Mr. Main and scores of others in the area.

Mr. Main found work as a heavy-equipment operator for Nicholas Savko & Sons Inc., the contractor CSX hired to build the \$175 million facility starting in late 2009. Now the North Baltimore resident is staying on with CSX itself, operating the cranes and other machines that shift freight-laden containers from one train to another or between trains and trucks.

"What kid, at some time, didn't want to work with trains?" Mr. Main said. "CSX is a great employer to work for."

Tuesday morning, he was one of dozens of terminal workers whose job it was to welcome 2,000 visitors during CSX's open house at the Northwest Ohio Intermodal Terminal, explaining to them how the facility works while making sure no one wandered too close to the equipment.

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance to get in here," said Bob Zimmerman of Defiance. Mr. Zimmerman lives near the CSX tracks on which the railroad began delivering container-laden trains to the terminal this year.

Visitors lined up for 20-minute turns to sit in bleachers to watch one of the terminal's five huge cranes demonstrate container-handling maneuvers while the other four performed workaday chores just down the line with container-loads of freight.

CSX began "block-swapping" loaded railcars between trains this year as terminal operations gradually ramped up.

Michael Ward, CSX's president and chief executive officer and one of several speakers, said the North Baltimore terminal is "the largest single investment CSX has made in decades" and touted its cutting-edge technology, including electrically powered cranes and state-of-the-art electronic tracking systems for shipments.

CSX itself has more than 200 employees at the terminal, and Ohio Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor said the potential for more than 2,000 spin-off jobs during the next 10 years as warehousing and logistics businesses settle nearby is "truly something to be excited about." The terminal's opening "symbolizes to the rest of the world that Ohio is open for business," she said.

And while some supervisors transferred in from other CSX facilities, most of the terminal's employees, like Mr. Main, were hired locally.

Aaron Patterson, a North Baltimore village councilman, said the terminal's advanced technology means many neighbors' fears about noise and pollution were unfounded.

"It's good for jobs, and good for the economy," Mr. Patterson said.

Ruth Ann Wright, a North Baltimore resident, said she suspects some in the community remain unhappy about the terminal's construction, which consumed 500 acres of farmland along State Rt. 18 west of Liberty Hi Road. The Ohio Department of Transportation plans to bypass Route 18 around North Baltimore, requiring 23.8 more acres to be taken.

But if the jobs forecasts bear out, Mrs. Wright said, "I think eventually it will work out for the better."

CSX expects most of the estimated 2 million containers passing through the North Baltimore terminal annually to transfer from one train to another. Cargo arriving on trains from ocean ports will be sorted into new trains destined for cities including Detroit, Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Indianapolis, St. Louis, and Chicago.

But it says about 20,000 shipments will be trucked to or from local markets such as Toledo, Findlay, Napoleon, and Fostoria during the first year of operations -- local business that is forecast to grow.

"This is a really big deal, and not just for Wood County. This is going to be helpful to the region, and to the whole United States," Wood County Commissioner James Carter said.

"It's going to be a big shot in the arm for northwest Ohio," said Bob Armstrong of Maumee, retired from a logistics-related job with Bostwick-Braun. "The ripple effect is going to be something else."

Tony Reams, executive director of the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments, predicted growth of "value-added" businesses near the terminal, such as light assembly plants, along with warehouse and distribution firms.

Paul Toth, the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority's president, said his agency will pursue opportunities to link Toledo's port with the North Baltimore terminal, whether by trucking or rail.





